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17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

An overview of educational television (ETV) to 1964 by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is presented. Only educational television that is telecast over commercial channels (other than closed circuit television) is reviewed.

ETV began in 1952 when the FCC reserved 242 channel assignments for noncommercial educational use. ETV channel reservations have since increased to over 350, and a further increase to about 700 is in prospect. The FCC said the financing of ETV can be done through endowments and the usual sources of funds for public and private education. Costs of operations could be met through cooperative programing and financing among several educational organizations in large communications. Since May 1962 grants have been authorized for construction of noncommercial stations with a ceiling of one million dollars for any one state. The grants are made through the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. Some of the rules governing ETV are that: only nonprofessional educational organizations may be licensed to operate as noncommercial ETV; the accreditations of educational organizations are considered; ETV programs may be educational, cultural, entertainment, or augmentative to school courses; ETV stations may not transmit programs for which money or other considerations are received; there is no minimum of hours of broadcasting required; and ETV is subject, in other respects, to the same technical rules governing commercial television.

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Educational Television 1964

An Overview by The Federal Communications Commission

ED002489

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
Office of Education

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Television has become an integral tool of education with an estimated classroom audience of more than seven million students in more than 800 school systems and 400 colleges and universities. Much of it is closed-circuit (cable) system, but more and more educational television is being telecast over commercial channels.

These stations, which come under regulation of the Federal Communications Commission, provide adult instruction, children's programs, and a general cultural and public affairs service. They are operated either by local educational-advancement groups, by local or state school systems, or by universities and colleges. Such stations reach an area serving 110 million people.

ETV Beginning

After several years of hearings and research, the FCC, in 1952, reserved 242 channel assignments (80 VHF and 162 UHF) for noncommercial educational use, 46 being assigned to "primary educational centers." (ETV channel reservations have since increased to over 350, and a further increase to about 700 is in prospect.)

The Commission stated that "the record shows the desire and ability of education to make a substantial contribution to the use of television. There is much evidence in the record concerning the use of television . . . it is agreed that the potential of television for education is much greater and more readily apparent than that of aural broadcasting, and that the interest of the educational community in the field is much greater than it was in aural broadcasting. . . . The public interest will clearly be served if these stations are used to contribute significantly to the educational process of the nation. The type of programs which have been broadcast by educational organizations, and those which the record indicates can and would be televised by educators, will provide a valuable complement to commercial programing."

The first grant for construction of a noncommercial ETV station was made by the Commission on July 23, 1952. But the station was never built. The first station to go on the air was KUHT of the University of Houston, Tex., on May 25, 1953, but the first to be licensed was WCET, Greater Cincinnati Educational Foundation — the year, 1955.

ETV Financing

Recognizing also that educators would have difficulty financing ETV, the FCC has said: ". . . Television is clearly a fertile field for endowment, and it seems probable that sufficient funds can be raised both through this method and through the usual sources of funds for public and private education to enable the construction and operation of many noncommercial educational stations. As concerns the costs of operation, there is the possibility of cooperative programing and financing among several educational organizations in large communities."

Low-power TV stations have been built for from 50 to 70 thousand dollars. If a closed-circuit system already exists, a school can add a low-power transmitter, antenna, and other essentials for about $20,000. (Conversions from wire to air require prior FCC authorization.)

Nearly every state has an ETV authority and over half have developed programs. Some receive state appropriations. A score of universities partially or wholly support ETV station operation. Support has also come from foundations, commercial stations, and networks.

Matching Federal Grants

Since May, 1962, federal grants have been authorized for construction of noncommercial stations with a ceiling of $1 million for any one state.

These grants are not made by the FCC. Applicants must be public or private educational institutions, organizations or bodies; or state, county, and municipal governments; or nonprofit foundations, corporations, or associations organized primarily to engage in or encourage ETV. They must apply through the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. Applicants must be eligible to receive a license from the FCC for a noncommercial station under Commission rules. Construction and operating authorizations to those found qualified are given by the FCC, whose rules and regulations govern all noncommercial ETV stations.

Lack of UHF receivers in the school and the home have hampered use of UHF reservations. However, a law, effective in April 1964, which requires all TV sets shipped in interstate commerce to be capable of receiving both VHF and UHF, should stimulate development of ETV, in particular.

In 1963, the Commission proposed revising its UHF channel allocation table to provide for nearly 2000 UHF assignments of which about 700 would be reserved for educational use (375 more UHF channels than at present). Seven states now have ETV network systems and many others including Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee have such linkages in preparation.

Recently, airborne television instruction has created much interest. A proposal to regularize and expand this airborne operation, now available only to a few Midwestern states, is under consideration by FCC. Two espe-

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cially equipped aircraft are used, one at a time, to beam TV educational programs by UHF to participating schools, colleges, and universities in Indiana and parts of Ohio, Kentucky, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin. Circling over Montpelier, Indiana, the aircraft transmits programs to receivers in classrooms.

Another recent development is the new Instructional Television Fixed Service. Established by the Commission, it allows transmission of instructional and cultural material to schools and selected receiver locations using several channels. A single applicant may use five channels now and may ultimately be authorized to use as many as 15. These channels are in the 2500–2690 megacycle band. Thirty-one channels are available. Licensees under this service may employ translators, boosters, and portable transmission equipment upon proper authorization by the Commission.

ETV Rules

Only nonprofit educational organizations may be licensed to operate noncommercial ETV.

In determining the eligibility of publicly supported educational organizations, the accreditation of their respective state departments of education is taken into consideration. Eligibility of private educational organizations is determined by accreditation of state departments of education or recognized regional or national educational accrediting organizations.

ETV programs may be educational, cultural, entertainment, or designed to augment school courses or transmit related routine or administrative matter.

An educational station may not transmit programs for which money or other consideration is received. No announcements promoting sale of products or services may be made. It may use programs furnished by others by making proper announcement of that fact.

No minimum number of hours of broadcasting is required. There is no prohibition on an educational body operating more than one ETV station in the same area, state, or another region.

In other respects, ETV is subject to the same technical rules governing commercial TV.

The FCC has an Educational Broadcasting Branch in the research and Education Division of its Broadcast Bureau. Among other things, it compiles information, conducts studies, makes recommendations relating to educational broadcast services licensed by the Commission.

Consultation service is available from the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, 1346 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D. C.

National Educational Television, 10 Columbus Circle, New York, N. Y., 10019, provides a cultural and public-affairs program service to affiliates and the U. S. Office of Education, also advises about educational TV matters.

All qualified educational applicants now use a simplified series of application forms (FCC 340 for construction permits; FCC 341 for licenses; and FCC 342 for renewal of licenses). Ownership reports are made on a new FCC form 323E. Nonprofit educational institutions applying for new or changed facilities in the Instructional Television Fixed Service use FCC form 330P.

No FCC fees are charged, or contemplated, for applications by tax-exempt organizations for TV or aural noncommercial educational broadcast facilities.

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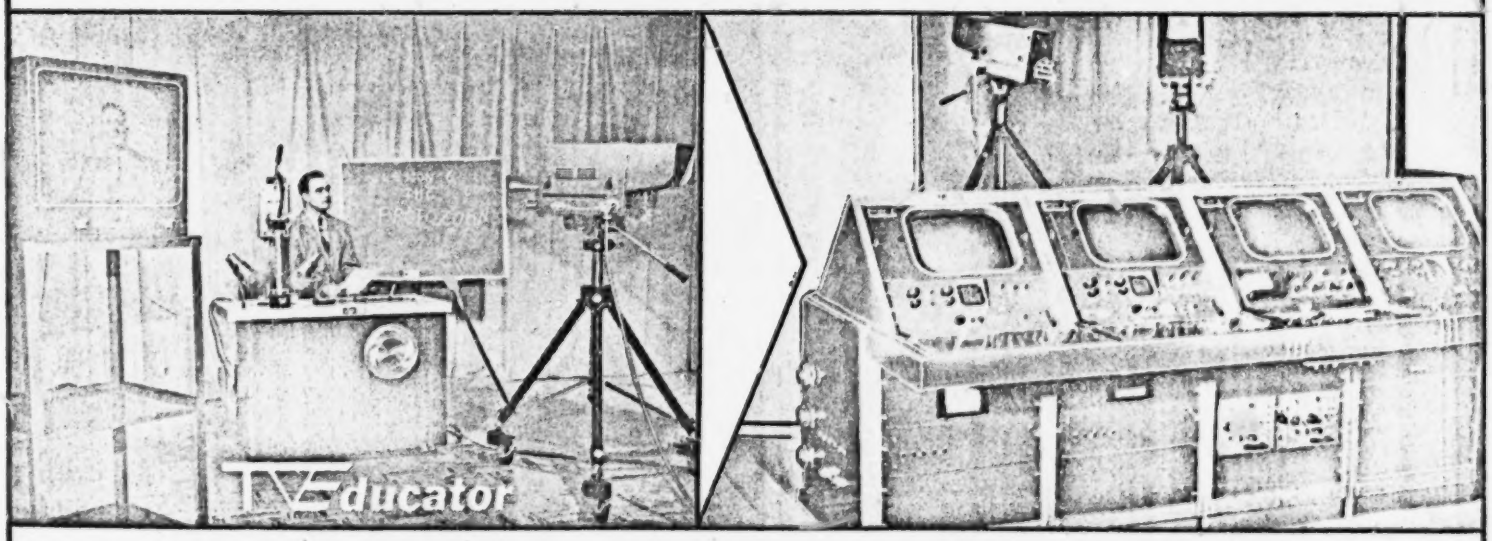

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